



# News Release

## IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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[www.idwr.idaho.gov](http://www.idwr.idaho.gov)

Release 2006-25

### Fences Crossing Stream Channels Could Cause Flooding Problems

For Immediate Release  
Boise, Idaho – April 21, 2006

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For the first time in years, just about every stream or flood channel in Idaho likely will fill with water sometime during the spring melt. But after six years of drought, many of those channels have fences built across them, which could act as a debris trap, causing flooding or channel damage.

“If too much debris piles up, the fence will act like a dam and force the water out of the channel or worse yet, cut a new channel,” IDWR Stream Channel Protection Specialist Terry Blau said. “It’s not in the best interest for landowners to leave those fences in during flood flows.”

Last year, a home was flooded near Albion because water from an upstream channel backed up and spilled out behind a debris-laden fence.

Blau says fences that are anchored in the channel-bottom pose the biggest problems because they are stronger and can withstand more debris. Blau recommends that landowners at least remove those anchors (usually a fence posts) before spring flows get too deep and too dangerous.

Posts driven into or anchored to a streambed are required by State Law to have a stream channel alteration permit. There are several fence designs that will keep livestock in while allowing debris to pass. Contact an IDWR stream channel protection specialist for details. Contact information can be found on the IDWR website: [www.idwr.idaho.gov](http://www.idwr.idaho.gov)

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